

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
SSM-05 SIG-03 SSO-00 SAA-01 PCH-02 /062 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS

APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND

PA/PRS - MR. CARTER

H - MR. FLATEN

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/IAI - MR. KORN

NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----087144 040023Z /13

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USNATO

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC 0000
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 3

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM
DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 3, 1978. FYI ONLY,
SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

MR. CARTER: THE BOMBING IN TEL AVIV TODAY, IN WHICH A
LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND INJURED, IS A
SAVAGE AND BRUTAL ACT. WE CONDEMN IT. WE CONDEMN THE
PERPETRATORS. THIS CRIME MUST REVOLT DECENT PERSONS
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EVERYWHERE. NOTHING CAN JUSTIFY SUCH TERRORISM. WE
EXTEND OUR SYMPATHY TO THE MANY INNOCENT VICTIMS AND TO
THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

Q. THERE WAS A REPORT JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO THAT
ISRAELI PLANES STRUCK SOUTH LEBANON, APPARENTLY IN
RETALIATION FOR THIS BOMBING. FIRST OF ALL, DO YOU KNOW
IF THAT'S TRUE? SECOND, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON IT?

A. UNFORTUNATELY I'VE SEEN THAT MYSELF ONLY WITHIN THE
LAST HALF HOUR. I DONT HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION BEYOND THAT
REPORT AT THIS POINT, AND THEREFORE I CANT HAVE ANY
COMMENT ON IT. IT'S JUST TOO EARLY.

Q. YOU ARE NOT ASKING THIS TIME THAT ISRAEL NOT
RETALIATE, AS YOU DID LAST TIME, AFTER THE MASSACRE ON THE
BUS?

A. GENERALLY SPEAKING, WE UNDERSTAND BOTH THE IMPULSES
AND THE EMOTIONS WHICH LEAD TO ACTIONS. WE ALSO
BELIEVE THAT, IN THE ORDINARY COURSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY
DONT HELP THE SITUATION. BUT I DONT HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY

ON THAT.

Q. ARE YOU SPECIFICALLY CONDEMNING THE PLO, WHICH HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS?

A. LET ME SAY THAT I EXPECTED THE QUESTION; I STARTED TO ANTICIPATE IT. IF IN FACT THE PLO HAS CLAIMED CREDIT, AS APPARENTLY THEY HAVE, THEN THE CONDEMNATION APPLIES TO THOSE WHO CLAIM THE CREDIT -- THEREFORE, THE PLO.

I SIMPLY HAVE TO OBSERVE HERE WHAT IS OBVIOUS: THAT OFTEN IN THE WAKE OF SUCH A TERRORIST ATTACK A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS WILL SUDDENLY LEAP FORWARD, AND IT MAY NOT BE JUST ONE. IT DOESN'T ALTER WHAT I AM SAYING,
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HOWEVER, WE DO NOT KNOW FOR A FACT WHO DID IT. BUT IF SOMEONE IS CLAIMING CREDIT FOR IT, THE CONDEMNATION APPLIES.

Q. THE THURSDAY BEFORE VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM THERE WAS A TERRORIST BOMB IN THE MARKET PLACE IN JERUSALEM KILLING SEVERAL PEOPLE. NOW ON THE THURSDAY BEFORE SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE IS DUE TO ARRIVE IN JERUSALEM THERE IS A BOMB IN THE MARKET PLACE IN TEL AVIV KILLING A NUMBER OF PEOPLE. IS IT THE DEPARTMENT'S OPINION THAT THESE TWO BOMBINGS ARE SOMEHOW RELATED TO THESE OFFICIAL AMERICAN VISITS, OR THAT THERE IS MORE THAN JUST A COINCIDENCE IN TIMING?

A. I DONT HAVE AN OPINION. I DONT KNOW. I HAVE NOTHING THAT I CAN OFFER, AND I WOULDNT WANT TO VENTURE A GUESS -- NOT FROM THIS PODIUM.

Q. REGARDING THE PLO. IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT THIS REPORT, THAT THEY HAVE CLAIMED FOR THIS, IS AN ACCURATE REPORT, WILL THE STATE DEPARTMENT DEMONSTRATE THAT IT REALLY BELIEVES THIS IS A SAVAGE AND BRUTAL ACT THAT WE CONDEMN BY CLOSING DOWN THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION INFORMATION OFFICE HERE IN WASHINGTON, DC?

A. I WILL DEAL WITH SUCH A CONJECTURE WHEN IT ARISES. I

CANT DEAL WITH IT IN AN ANTICIPATORY WAY.

Q. THE SYRIAN SANCTIONS ON THE HILL, WHAT IS THE VIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OR HOW DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT STAND?

A. THE ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT
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THERE SHOULD BE A SECURITY SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SYRIA, AS WE MADE CLEAR IN OUR PRESENTATIONS TO CONGRESS. SYRIA PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST.

WE OF COURSE ARE GOING TO BE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS ON THE AID BILL -- WHICH, I MIGHT ADD, I DOUBT IS FINISHED YET; I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER AMENDMENTS WILL COMING -- INCLUDING THE PORTION DEALING WITH SYRIA. WE WILL CONTINUE TO URGE THAT THE CONGRESS APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THIS PROGRAM.

Q. SINCE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES OF NO ACTION AGAINST MR. MUGABE'S TERRORISTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE SYRIAN ARMY'S TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN REPUDIATED IN THE HOUSE YESTERDAY, COULD YOU TELL US IF THE SECRETARY IS CONSIDERING SOME REVISION IN THESE POLICIES, THE POSSIBILITY OF REVISION, OR WILL THE ARABISTS AND THE BLACK POWER PEOPLE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT STILL PREVAIL.

A. LET ME SAY THAT THE EDITORIAL COMMENT I DO NOT ACCEPT IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTION. I SIMPLY WANT THAT TO BE UNDERSTOOD ON THE RECORD.

NO. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE APPROACH WE ARE TAKING IN BOTH INSTANCES OFFERS THE BEST HOPE, NOT ONLY FOR AN END TO NEEDLESS SUFFERING AND BLOODSHED BUT FOR A LASTING PEACE IN BOTH AREA.

Q. YESTERDAY 45 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ALSO SENT A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT URGING THE ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE MORE DECISIVE ACTION IN THE FACE OF THE MASSACRE AND FORCED MIGRATION OF CHRISTIANS FROM LEBANON. AND THEY HAVE ALSO INVOLVED SYRIA IN THIS THING. DO YOU KNOW IF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO DO ANYTHING TO RESPOND TO THE LETTER?

A. I CANT SPEAK TO THAT, BUT LET ME TALK ABOUT THE SITUATION (GENERALLY).

WE HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED FOR SOME TIME IN THE

EFFORT TO BRING THAT ASPECT OF THE TOTAL LEBANESE PROBLEM UNDER CONTROL. I THINK THAT ALL THE PARTIES IN THE AREA KNOW THE DEGREE OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE EFFORTS TO BRING THAT PARTICULAR CONFLICT TO AN END AND UNDER CONTROL.

WE APPRECIATE THE CONCERN THAT THE CONGRESSMEN HAVE SHOWN ON THIS ISSUE. WE SHARE THE CONCERN. WE HAVE BEEN MAKING THE KIND OF EFFORTS WHICH I BELIEVE THEY BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE MAKING. WE ARE HAPPY TO DISCUSS IT WITH THEM. WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING IT WITH THE CONGRESS.

THAT SPECIFIC LETTER, I HAVEN'T SEEN. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE A REPLY TO IT.

Q. IN YOUR ANSWER ON THE ACTION OF AID TO SYRIA, YOU SAID THAT SYRIA IS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE. AND THEN YOU SAID YOU SHARE, AND YOU AGREE WITH, THE CONCERN FOR WHAT THE CONGRESS SEES AS THE SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON VIS-A-VIS THE CHRISTIANS. DONT YOU FEEL THERE IS A LITTLE BIT OF CONFLICT?

A. NO. I SHARE THE CONCERN OF THE CONGRESS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. I WASN'T EXPRESSING MYSELF IN THE LETTER. I WANT TO MAKE THAT DISTINCTION. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS SUMMARIES, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE196669
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WBHARRIS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780319-0657
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808100/aaaadgjg.tel
Line Count: 247
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fbc48457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1542492
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 3
TAGS: SOPN, XF
To: AMMAN BEIRUT MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fbc48457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014